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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to provide a multicultural, bilingual inservice training program for the staff of six early childhood centers serving a large Hispanic population. The inservice training consisted of weekly seminars, guest lectures, classroom observations, and feedback interviews with center directors and executives of agencies that cater to a Hispanic clientele. Assessment instruments were developed and administered to evaluate the teaching knowledge and competency of the 10 participants before and after the intervention. Pre- and postintervention tests demonstrated that all 10 participants increased their teaching knowledge and competency, especially in relation to the importance of a bilingual, multicultural approach to teaching. Three appendixes contain questions asked of agency executives, questions asked of center directors regarding their perceptions of the caregivers on their staff, and a copy of the teaching practices assessment instrument. (MDM)

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Improving Knowledge and Competency of Early Childhood Providers Through an In-Service Multicultural Bilingual Program

by

Emilia Reginatto

Cluster XLIV

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A Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Joan Bernstein

Joan Bernstein, Ed. D.

Director Life Skills Center

Montclair State College, N.J.

8/10/93

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Emilia Reginatto under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

20 September 1993

Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Wong Bouverat

Roberta Wong Bouverat, Ph. D., Adviser

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To my husband, Aldo Reginatto, for his constant and loving support.

To Dr. Roberta Wong Bouverat, I wish to express a grateful acknowledgment for her guidance and expertise.

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ABSTRACT

Improving Knowledge and Competency of Early Childhood Providers Through an In-Service Multicultural Bilingual Program. Reginatto, Emilia, 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Inservice Training/Elementary/Secondary Teacher Education/Preservice Teachers/DayCare/NurserySchool/ Community Multidisciplinary Team.

This practicum was designed to provide a multicultural bilingual in-service training to improve the knowledge and competency of ten caregivers. The day care centers in which the caregivers worked were located in urban areas of two counties where many minority families lived.

The writer developed and administered assessment intruments and completed checklists to evaluate the teaching knowledge and competency of the participants; conducted periodic feedback interviews with the directors and executives of agencies that cater to an essentially Hispanic clientele; taught weekly seminars; organized reading and visual materials for the participants and prepared assignments.

Analysis of the assessment data revealed that the ten participants increased their knowledge and competency in the areas covered by the in-service training. The participants became more aware of the importance of a bilingual multicultural approach to teaching and were able to apply it to their performance and interaction with the children.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

Six early childhood centers with a large population of minority children, particularly Hispanics, were selected to implement an in-service program to improve early childhood practitioners skill competences.

The early childhood centers were strategically located in urban areas of two counties where many minority families live. The sites of the early childhood centers were situated with ease of transportation to and from the centers and also allowed many children to walk to classes. The early childhood centers from both counties served primarily low income families and families in poverty.

One of the site locations had a population of 29.10% Whites, 25.54% African Americans, 29.05% Hispanics and 16.22% of other races. The economy in the area had deteriorated because industries had closed down or moved to other locations. The lack of work had brought poverty to the families and an ethnic change in the community population.

The other two early childhood centers were located in urban areas greatly impacted by recession. This was one of the ten most important industrial areas of the state (Clemens, 1988) but presently many industries and businesses have laid off personnel or closed down. The area was populated by 47.10% Whites, 14.26% African Americans, 28.10% Hispanics and 10.52% of other races.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The group involved in the in-service training consisted of ten caregivers. Seven were bilingual (English-Spanish) with good or fairly good command of English and three were African Americans with very limited knowledge of Spanish.

Participants in the program held high school diplomas or general education diplomas. They were primarily women between thirty and forty years of age. Many participants had little teaching experience. All were presently working in early childhood centers with a large population of minority children.

Four of the early childhood centers enrolled between 85 and 110 children and the other two enrolled a population between 45 to 60 students. The children in attendance were two and a half to four and a half years old. Most of the children attended full time sessions. The number of the children in the classes was between 18 to 23. In two of the day care centers the Hispanic children population was over 95% and parents mainly communicated in Spanish as English was very limited.

Two child centers had adequate facilities for the children. One was attended mainly by African Americans and was situated in proximity to public housing which facilitated transportation to and from the center. The other was attended mainly by Hispanic children and was situated in a downtown area where many Hispanic families lived. The predominantly Hispanic day care center recently moved to an old public school that also housed a full-day kindergarten program for twenty children and an after school program for sixty- five low-income children. The four other early childhood centers were located in multipurpose buildings with limited space and facilities.

The writer is a Program Instructor and Field Advisor of an in-service multicultural bilingual training program. The purpose of the practicum was to improve knowledge and competency of early childhood providers who are presently working in day care centers with a large population of minority children.

The writer's responsibilities centered around designing, administering and implementing the in-service training program. A weekly seminar was conducted to increase participant's knowledge and competence in working with young children. A monthly supervision in the work site was attempted to give feedback and to assist participants in the implementation of theory into classroom practices.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

High quality early childhood programs are achieved through a combination of factors: well trained caregivers, appropriate curriculum, good didactic materials and adequate physical plant. However, caregivers are the most important element for the success or failure of an early childhood program. It was generally recognized that the training of child care providers was essential to high-quality child care (Abbott-Shimm 1990).

In addition to the general qualification of competent practitioners, those serving minority children and their families must be knowledgeable and competent in dealing with cultural diversity. Also, bilingual (Spanish-English) caregivers must know when and how to use Spanish with children and families who do not speak English and have poor command of English.

Katz (1984) said that the majority of teachers in the field of early childhood education had no pre-service education. In the early childhood centers where the in-service program was going to be implemented many caregivers did not have previous training or had inadequate early childhood training. In either case, caregivers were working in centers where a large population of minority children attended. The situation had created a serious problem in the quality of the programs.

Stated briefly, the problem was that untrained early childhood practitioners working with minorities did not have the knowledge and competency to work with children. The caregivers also lacked the multicultural and bilingual component required to offer high quality early childhood programs.

Problem Documentation

Teleconferences, structured and unstructured interviews, a Teaching Practices Assessment and observations of caregivers provided the writer with evidence that the early childhood practitioners needed to improve the quality of the care and education offered to children.

In February, 1992, three teleconferences were held with three child care agency executives who were concerned mostly with Hispanic clients. During each conversation five questions were asked (Appendix A). The answers given by the executives were summarized as follows. Executives were concerned with the poor quality of education offered to Hispanic children and dissatisfied with the readiness skills the children developed in the day care centers. It was generally agreed that a training program was needed for caregivers who worked in a multicultural/bilingual setting. Skillful caregivers were useful in understanding Hispanic childrens' cultural responses to the environment. Furthermore, executives stated that caregivers with multicultural/bilingual knowledge and expertise benefited the community as a whole because they understood the cultural characteristics of the childrens' parents and families.

The findings of the teleconferences showed concern for the poor quality of education given to Hispanic preschoolers and a need for trained multicultural and bilingual caregivers. It was agreed that competent muticultural/bilingual caregivers would benefit children and community.

During March and April, 1992, an instrument schedule was developed and applied to two Directors of day care centers with a big Hispanic population. Ten open-ended

questions were asked to find out about the knowledge and competency of the caregivers in the jobs (Appendix B).

A summary of the answers given by these executives revealed that both directors concurred in recognizing the need for more training to develop competency on the job. Both directors also indicated that caregivers had difficulty in implementing activities suggested by the head teacher and many of the activities offered to the children were not developmentally appropriate. The use of dittos in the classrooms was a daily occurrence and science was not an important part of the curriculum. Art was offered to the children in both schools but one director said that in the center art projects were modeled for the children. There was no variety of activities offered to the children, circle time was not correctly implemented and caregivers didn't have good strategies for working with parents.

The findings of the directors' interviews showed the need to train caregivers in child development and appropriate practices. It also indicated that the training had to be focused on a multicultural/bilingual approach.

An assessment of teaching practices was designed by the writer. The distribution of correct answers on the Teaching Practice Assessment (Appendix C) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Teaching Practices Assessment Scores

	PARTICIPANT									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
QUESTIONS										
1. Discipline	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
2. Teach. skills	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
3. Art	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
4. Child dev.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
5. Discipline	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
6. Safety	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
7. Health	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8. Safety	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
9. Bilingualism	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
10Teach. skills	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
SCORES	5	6	6	4	5	5	6	4	4	5

1: Correct answer given by the participant.

0: Incorrect answer given by the participant.

The Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument showed that of the ten questions asked seven participants answered correctly 5 or above .

Direct observation of the day care centers by the writer showed that caregivers asked mainly closed questions. Some examples used were: Do you put your fingers in your mouth? Do you put your sneaker in your mouth? Is the apple red? Is this picture pretty?

Some examples of inappropriate disciplinary strategies taken by the caregivers included physically picking up a child who refused to join the group and sitting her on the circle. The child cried for fifteen minutes but she was ignored by the caregiver. When two children were fighting over some blocks a caregiver angrily yelled to stop the fight and then ordered one of the boys to hand his blocks to the other child. A caregiver got angry and knocked loudly on a table when a group of three year old children lost interest in the activity they were doing. Caregiver interactions with the children consisted mainly of giving directions or handing out papers. The children were told in which centers to play and no options were given during free play. Instead of art projects very young children were given dittos to color. No science centers were provided for the children in the classrooms. The writer also observed that bilingual caregivers did not expose children to Spanish literature.

The findings of the observation showed that caregivers exhibited poor teaching skills by asking closed questions, using inappropriate guidance, confusing art with fine motor activities, and offering no science activities. It was also observed that no Spanish literature was offered to the children.

Causative Analysis

Caregivers hired by early childhood centers with a large population of minority children were mainly minority women from the community who did not have formal training in teaching and some did not have a high school diploma. Centers were pressed to staff the classrooms and did not follow strict requirements when hiring personnel.

Lacking competence and knowledge, caregivers were ignorant of how children develop, the appropriate strategies for development of self control, and the optimal approach in facilitating children's learning. Furthermore, most of the caregivers had limited experience or no experience at all in interacting with children and in hastening children's learning.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the pertinent literature gave an overview of how the problem is seen by competent professionals in the field and gave a better understanding of the problems and solutions described in this proposal.

1. Concerning high quality programs.

In America 2000: An Education Strategy (1991) it was proposed that "all children in America will start school ready to learn". High quality early childhood programs were a priority in the strategy for reforming the educational system because it was recognized that children actively constructed their knowledge during the first years of life. Schweinhart and Weikart (1985) reported that seven research studies demonstrated that good preschool programs had both short- and long-term positive effects on low-income youngsters. Good quality programs improved intellectual performance during early childhood and scholastic placement during the elementary school years. The authors also added that despite these findings still there are not enough good early childhood programs for the low-income child.

According to Kagan (1989) the concern about early childhood education was at a two-decade high. The concern involved parents, educators, politicians and businessmen who were realizing the need of good early childhood programs. They were recognizing that if poor programs were offered to a segment of the children's population before they entered kindergarten those children would suffer an "opportunity gap" that would affect their future success.

Mitchell (1989) addressed the problem of quality programs by stating that early childhood education should aim at insuring uniformly high quality programs for every child. The author also pointed out that continuity (stable group of children, same staff members through the program year) and comprehensiveness

(necessary academic, health, social and nutritional services) were essential aspects of high-quality programs.

Summarizing the ideas expressed by the different authors it was pointed out that quality programs for early childhood education were a priority to help young children develop, regardless of the economic level of the family. High quality programs had a direct correlation with the importance that the nation placed on the younger generation.

2. Concerning professional competence in child care.

Poor performance by the teaching staff, including teacher aides, caused poor quality programs, class management problems and harmed the child's learning process. Ruopp, Travers, Glantz & Coelen (1979) reported that untrained caregivers were less effective in helping children to develop than were trained caregivers. According to Kuykendall (1990) caregiver training in child development was a decisive factor in whether the child care was beneficial or harmful for young children.

Teacher aides were an important part of the teaching team. A well trained aide helped in obtaining positive results in class management and allowed the teacher the time needed for a positive interaction with the children. Beach (1973) noted that teachers needed the assistance of aides to provide more individual attention to students. Johnson & Faunce (1973) noted that aides' roles have changed from the traditional classroom-helper, shoelace-tier, eraser-banger, to that of a direct participant in the educational process which made training and competence advisable. Lacattiva (1985) mentioned the following problems when using untrained paraprofessionals in the classroom: authority and role confusion, personality differences, misalignment of instructional priorities and task inefficiency.

Daniel (1990) wrote about the problems of maintaining good child care staffing and affirmed that an untrained helper diluted the effectiveness of staff-child interactions and undermined the quality of the program. Jorde-Bloom (1988) pointed out that unhealthy, negative environments in centers were the result of the members' unproductive interpersonal relations as well as confusion of roles and responsibilities.

Competent early childhood professionals, including teacher aides, helped to provide positive experiences in the child care environment. But unqualified teacher aides hampered the good management of the classroom and impeded the learning processes of the child. Trained caregivers were effective members of the teaching team. Their presence allowed the teacher more individual time with the children which was an important factor in the educational process.

3. Concerning Training and In-Service Training.

Addressing the alternatives of improving early childhood programs, Almy (1988) said that while more training for high-level preparation of early childhood educators must be provided, training for early childhood practitioners was essential to provide good quality programs. Jones (1984) also was concerned with training but he included the idea of stability and motivation of trainees. Jones believed that a competent caregiver must nurture the child's physical and emotional needs and have a commitment to humanize the environment.

Abbot-Shimm (1990) considered it important to evaluate program, staff and resources available to identify needs before attempting any training. In addition, high quality child care could only be obtained if staff training is provided on a regular basis.

According to Wood & Thompson (1980) adults learned best through concrete experiences where they applied what was being learned. The authors also

noted that adults usually were committed to learning when the goals and objectives were realistic and important to them and perceived as being immediately useful.

4. Concerning multicultural education.

In the last few years, Ramsey & Derman-Sparks (1992) indicated that changing demographics in the United States and an awareness that the school system was failing to address the lack of multiculturally skilled practitioners had resulted in a deep challenge to our educational practices. Therefore, early childhood educators needed to realize how prejudice hurts all children and families. Early childhood curricula must have a multicultural orientation to meet the challenge of diversity and thus achieve the standards of a high quality programs (Jones & Derman-Sparks 1992, 12).

According to Delagado (1980) there was a rapidly growing Hispanic population, with a distinctive cultural characteristic that was having an impact on the child care services. The failure to understand Hispanic culture, values and attitudes resulted in unsuccessful children's programs. Ideally child care programs were staffed with bilingual/bicultural personnel but, if non-Hispanic personnel were hired they should have had an in-training service in Hispanic culture.

Explaining the role of teachers in multicultural education, Ramsey (1987) said that the teacher was the critical variable that made the goals of acceptance, respecting and appreciating oneself and others the authentic dynamics of the classroom. According to Diaz Soto (1991), early childhood teachers have endless possibilities as role models for children. Educators of young children could establish the "classroom climate", accepting individual differences with regard to culture and language.

In summary, the literature acknowledged that high quality early childhood programs must be a priority in the nation to prepare childrens' readiness to avoid future school failure. In order to provide high quality programs childcare workers must be highly trained personnel. The training must be multiculturally oriented to increase teacher skills to benefit not only children but also parents and community.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

In order to develop the competencies necessary for offering high quality early childhood programs, the following goal and outcomes were projected for this practicum. The goal was to provide multicultural/bilingual training to early childhood practitioners.

Expected Outcomes

After the implementation of the in-service training program:

1. The three executives would voice acceptance that the caregivers are in the process of improving skills in working with children through knowledge of early childhood development. Caregivers would also gain competence in working with the Hispanic population.

2. The two directors would acknowledge that the caregivers have received preparation in child development and developmentally appropriate practices focused on a multicultural/bilingual approach.

3. Seven of the participating caregivers would answer correctly seven of the ten questions on the Teaching Practice Assessment. An

increase in the number of participants scoring a greater number of questions correctly would thereby demonstrate increased knowledge.

4. While the writer would observe the participating caregivers to determine overall growth in teaching performance, the Spanish literature inclusion would be reported specifically. Observations would show that each caregiver who has Spanish speaking children would present weekly at least one piece of Spanish literature to the children.

Measurements of Outcomes

During and after the implementation of the in-service multicultural bilingual program the writer talked informally with the agency executives and directors to receive feedback concerning the caregivers increase in child development knowledge and teaching competency growth.

A Teaching Practice Assessment Instrument was designed by the writer to compare and evaluate changes as a result of training. The instrument was utilized before the beginning of the training and was utilized at the end of the implementation period to measure concepts and skills. The expected standard of achievement was that seven participants would answer correctly seven of the ten questions of the Teaching Practice Assessment.

The writer documented the weekly use of Spanish literature through record keeping. In those instances when the writer could not observe every example of weekly readings of Spanish literature, participants presented the titles of the readings at the weekly seminar.

During the implementation of the practicum seven multiple choice tests were administered to participants to evaluate each unit taught in the seminar. Six teaching competency checklists were also designed by the writer to evaluate through observations, the teaching performance of participants in the school environment.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

To improve the performance of caregivers there appeared to be three possible solutions: to hire educators with early childhood college degrees, to send personnel to take college courses or to offer an in-service training.

The early childhood centers were unable to hire early childhood educators with college degrees. Budgetary restriction concerning personnel resulted in poor salaries that did not attract qualified teachers, and undesirable locations aggravated the situation for hiring early childhood educators. Sending caregivers to attend college courses in early childhood education required budgetary allowances to pay college credits and additional time to attend college. Moreover, another disadvantage was that often it was difficult for the students to translate the theory learned in college into practice.

The in-service training was the most viable solution because the early childhood centers did not incur additional expenses. Also, the participants remained in the work place most of the time and implemented what they learned. Katz (1982) believed that in-service training had many advantages over other types of training. The knowledge trainees received in-service is more organized compared to that obtained from sporadic workshops. The goals of the training and the goals of the institutions were the same. Trainees were also able to promptly put theory into practice.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The poor quality of education provided to minority children in the day care centers showed the inadequacy of knowledge and competency of caregivers. The caregivers also lacked the multicultural and bilingual component required to offer high quality early childhood programs.

The in-service training program had a duration of thirty weeks in which the participants had weekly seminars and once a month observation on the work-site by the writer. During the whole duration of the training the writer led participants to positively accept themselves as members of minorities. The writer helped them also to understand the vital role they had in the lives of children.

Before implementing the program the writer observed the participants at the work site to insure training would closely match their needs and be relevant. Abbot-Shimm (1990) pointed out that training child care providers was essential for high-quality programs. However, before attempting an effective in-service training, it was essential to evaluate the program and the staff to identify needs. An assessment of the resources also had to be estimated for operative results. To the author accordingly, the identification of training needs was the first step in the planning process, followed by program and resource evaluations.

According to Parekh & Mankodi (1982), the inefficient service rendered by teachers was largely due to lack of continuous training. Teaching defects could have been removed through in-training; otherwise poor teaching skills were repeated. After implementing a theory-practice program in the greater St. Louis area, Klass & Nall (1989) found out that caregivers felt that there was an improvement in self-confidence that permitted them to perform teaching duties better. Mitchell (1989) affirmed that for improving the quality of early childhood programs, it was essential to have a well-trained staff that understood the theories of child development, coupled with the direct experience of working with young children.

Wade (1984) documented that in-service training was highly effective for improving teacher performance. The author also stated that "contrary to popular opinion, whether a participant voluntarily chose to attend in-service training or was required to attend, it did not make a significant difference in the training effect size."

In-service training was a solution that proved highly beneficial. Moreover, this strategy allowed the trainer to observe the participants performance on-site and to suggest changes as necessary, which was an advantage over other methods.

Report of Action Taken

In February 1992 the writer held teleconferences with three executive child care agencies who were concerned mostly with Hispanic clients. During the teleconferences five questions were asked (Appendix A) to find out the executives opinion about the quality of education given to Hispanic children in their community and to assess the need of a multicultural bilingual training program for caregivers.

During March and April 1992 an instrument schedule (Appendix B) was applied to two Directors of day care centers attended by a large population of Hispanic children. The ten open questions addressed the knowledge and competency of the caregivers in their jobs.

An assessment instrument (Appendix C) to evaluate knowledge and competence in the job was applied on October and November 1992 to the ten participants of the program. The evaluation of the assessment instrument showed that participants scored lower than seven correct answers.

Direct observations of the care centers by the writer were done to asses the caregivers performance in the job sites. An important aspect that was assessed was the multicultural approach to teaching, the use of Spanish language and Spanish literature in the classroom.

Before implementing the practicum the writer reviewed and discussed the proposal with the the Director of the Life Skills Center (Curriculum Supervisor) to make her aware of the strategies, details, population involved and duration of the plan. Six day care centers involved in the practicum were also informed of the multicultural bilingual program to make them aware of the strategies and details of the plan and to ask their support.

The implementation of the practicum started on December 1992 and lasted for thirty weeks. The calendar plan involved in the proposal had to have some minor adjustments because six day cares centers were involved in the training and not all of them had the same vacation schedules. Another minor change was to replace a Hispanic participant who left the program before implementation.

The content of the training was divided into seven units that addressed the following areas: The developing child from birth to five years old, keeping children safe and healthy, offering a motivating learning environment, supporting the social and emotional development of children, promoting physical and cognitive development of children, supporting children's creative expression and professionalism, and relating with families. Unit teaching was between two and four weeks depending of the amount of content that was planned to be taught.

The methodology used to implement the practicum was a six hour weekly seminar taught by the writer, and monthly visits by the writer to the participants' work-sites to assist them with the application of theory into classroom practice. Several strategies were used during the seminar. Strategies included lectures, discussions, video tape, hands-on activities, assignment, simulations, text and supplementary readings and field work and report.

Every unit was evaluated by a multiple-choice test and by six checklists completed by the writer. In each unit participants had required assignments. Unit one assignment was recording for one hour the behaviors of a child. For unit two a safety list to evaluate the environment was developed and applied. For unit three classroom environments were

rearranged applying the theory learned in the seminar. For unit four every participant chose a child from the classroom and wrote a plan indicating how to develop self esteem in that particular child. For unit five discovery corners were established in the classrooms and for unit six art corners were organized in the classrooms. For unit seven participants made a community resources list that could be shared with the day care center and parents.

Participants used a textbook by Phillips, C. (1991) "Essentials for Child Development Associated Working with Young Children". Several articles from "Young Children", The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, were also included in the assigned readings.

After the implementation of the practicum an assessment instrument (Appendix C) was given to the participants to evaluate the results of the multicultural bilingual training. An instrument schedule was applied to two directors of day care centers where participants worked. Teleconferences were conducted to secure feedback of the bilingual multicultural training with executives of agencies that deal with Hispanic clients.

The following schedule took effect before and during the implementation:

February 1992	1. Placed teleconferences with executives of agencies that addressed Hispanic clientele.
March/April 1992	2. Visited day care centers where the practicum was implemented. 3. Interviewed directors of day care centers.
May/September 1992	4. Started developing the training program. 5. Looked for materials and articles needed for the training. 6. Registered participants.

October/ November 1992	7. Administered assessment instrument to the participants. 8. Adjusted and corrected the training program.
December 1992	9. Informed teachers of the details of the training program. 10. Observed participants in the work-site. 11. Planned and implemented orientation meeting with participants to introduce the goals and expectations of the multicultural bilingual training program.
January 1993	12. Began seminars teaching the unit on "The developing child from birth to five years old". 13. Visited participants' work-sites.
February 1993	14. Taught unit on "Keeping children safe and healthy". 15. Participants attended lecture given by expert in nutrition. 16. Participants attended lecture given by expert in child abuse and neglect. 17. Started developing unit on "Offering a motivating learning environment". 18. Visited participants' work-sites.

March 1993	19. Completed unit on "Offering a motivating learning environment".
	20. Taught unit on "Supporting the social and emotional development of children".
	21. Visited participants' work-sites.
	22. Started teaching unit on "Promoting the physical and cognitive development of children" .
April 1993	23. Completed unit on "Promoting the physical and cognitive development of children".
	24. Started teaching unit on "Supporting children's creative expression".
	25. Visited participants' work-sites.
	26. To receive feedback of the training, interviewed directors of day care centers where the participants worked, and agency executives who catered to Hispanic clientele.
May 1993	27. Completed unit on "Supporting children's creative expression".
	28. Started teaching unit on "Professionalism and relating with families".
	29. Visited participants' work-sites.
June 1993	30. Completed unit on "Professionalism and relating with families".
	31. Administered assessment instrument.
	32. Ended seminars.

33. Visited participant's work-sites.

34. Gave each participant a final comment about the improvements observable in the teaching performance.

35. Interviewed directors of day care centers.

July 1993

36. Placed teleconferences with executives of agencies that addressed Hispanic clientele.

37. Reviewed the program to make any necessary adjustments.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

To improve the performance of caregivers there appeared to be three possible solutions: to hire educators with early childhood college degrees, to send personnel to take college courses or to offer an in-service training.

The early childhood centers were unable to hire early childhood educators with college degrees. Budgetary restriction concerning personnel resulted in poor salaries that did not attract qualified teachers, and undesirable locations aggravated the situation for hiring early childhood educators. Sending caregivers to attend college courses in early childhood education required budgetary allowances to pay college credits and additional time to attend college. Moreover, another disadvantage was that often it was difficult for the students to translate the theory learned in college into practice.

The in-service training was the most viable solution because the early childhood centers did not incur additional expenses. Also, the participants remained in the work place most of the time and implemented what they learned. Katz (1982) believed that in-service training had many advantages over other types of training. The knowledge trainees received in-service is more organized compared to that obtained from sporadic workshops. The goals of the training and the goals of the institutions were the same. Trainees were also able to promptly put theory into practice.

2. Before and after the implementation of the in-service program an instrument schedule was administered to two day care directors (Appendix B). After the implementation directors agreed that caregivers had improved in knowledge and competency. Activities were more varied, art projects were process-oriented and circle time was short and appropriately implemented. Participants developed science areas in the classrooms and asked open questions to reinforce math concepts during play time. Participants are communicating better with parents using the strategies learned in the seminars.

3. A teaching practice assessment instrument (Appendix C) was given to each participant before and after the training. Participants were required to resolve ten situations that are fairly common in day care centers. The standard of achievement expected was seven correct answers. The questions in the assessment instrument addressed the areas: Discipline, teaching skills, art, child development, safety, health, and bilinguism. Figures 1 and 2 show the number of correct answers given by the participants in the Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument.

Figure 1.

Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument Results
(Completed before the in-service training)

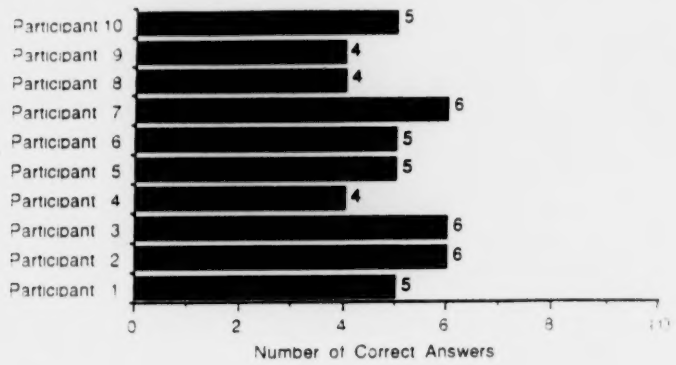
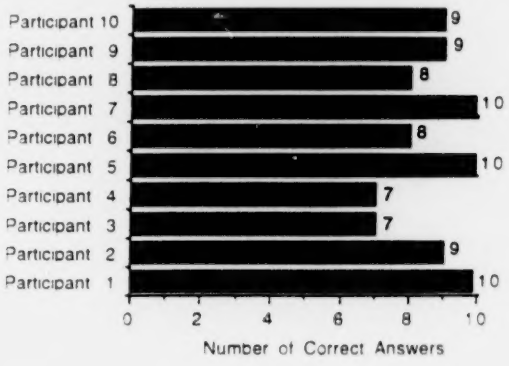


Figure 1 shows that the ten participants had scored less than 7, which was the required standard of achievement . The chart also indicated a variation in participants scores ranging from 4 to 6 correct answers out of 10. Itemized individual results are shown in Table 1.

Figure 2.

Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument Results
(Completed after the in-service training)



The results presented in Figure 2 show that ten participants reached or exceeded 7 correct answers. There was a variation in the scores from 7 to 10. Itemized individual results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Teaching Practices Asessment Instrument Results

(After the in-service training)

	PARTICIPANTS									
QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Discipline	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.Teach. skil.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
3. Art	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4. Child Dev.	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
5. Discipline	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
6. Safety	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7. Health	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
8. Safety	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9.Bilingualism	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
10Teach.skil.	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SCORES	10	9	7	7	10	8	10	8	9	9

1: Correct answer given by the participant.

0: Incorrect answer given by the participant.

Figures 3 and 4 show results of the Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument by areas.

Figure 3.

Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument Results by Areas
(Completed before the in-service training)

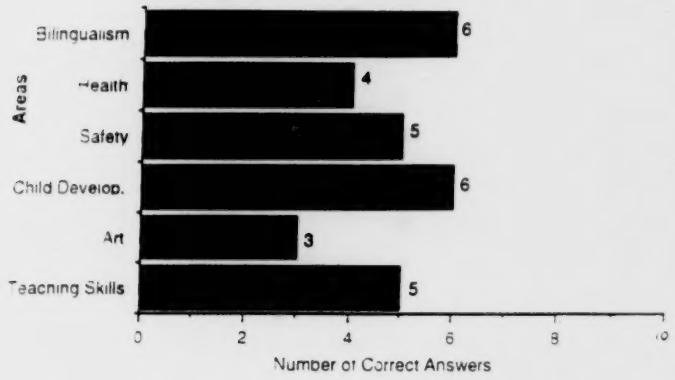


Figure 3 shows that the participants weakest areas were art and health. The strongest areas were child development and bilinguism.

Figure 4.

Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument Results by Areas
(Completed after the in-service training)

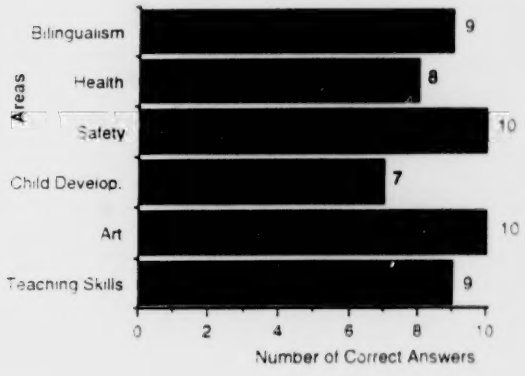


Figure 4 shows that each area improved after the training. The highest scores were in the areas of safety and art. Participants scored the lowest in child development. .

4. An important component of the practicum was to encourage participants to implement a multicultural bilingual approach to teaching. Observations by the writer and recording by the participants indicated that Hispanic participants read a minimum of one piece of Spanish literature per week. Observations also showed that Hispanic participants sang Spanish songs with the children and all participants labeled the classroom areas in both English and Spanish.

5. During the implementation of the practicum seven multiple choice tests were administered to evaluate the areas of discipline, teaching skills, art, child development, safety, health, and bilingualism. Each test had ten items to resolve. Of the ten participants, five scored 7 or above in every test.

6. After each area was evaluated the writer completed six checklists to evaluate the competency of participants in the classroom and in the playground.

Discussion

The in-service training program for caregivers working with young minority children was successfully completed as evidenced by the data results of the assessment tools utilized, interviews and observations. The information covered by the program helped to improve the knowledge and competency of the caregivers.

A comparison of the results of the two Teaching Practices Assessment Instruments showed that all participants gained teaching knowledge and competencies with the training. The three participants who scored 4 in the pre-assessment increased the scores to 7, 8 and 9. Some participants benefited from the training more than others; participants one and five increased the scores from 5 to 10.

Participant three did not improve much; her pre-assessment score was 6 and her post-assessment score 7. This participant was quite sick for the last two months of the training and perhaps her illness influenced the post-assessment score results.

The score results by areas indicated that participants scored the lowest in the area of child development. After evaluating this outcome the writer concluded that the assessment instrument needed more items in the category of child development in order to be more reliable.

Generally caregivers had difficulty distinguishing the area of art from fine motor area before the training. The score results of 10 showed that the training enabled participants to differentiate the areas of art and fine motor and were able to offer process oriented art projects.

The day care directors reported improvement in caregivers competency. Caregivers attending the in-service training planned and implemented science and pre-math activities and presented art in appropriate ways to children. Also an unexpected result from the caregivers new approach to teaching was that it motivated the other day care center teachers to rearrange the environment in the classroom and to include science in the activities.

Participants benefited in many ways from the multicultural bilingual training. During class discussions about ethnicity, race and development participants shared the feelings and stereotyping they had about others. After the training pride in their ethnicities and better understanding of others was accomplished. An Hispanic participant said "I did not know that everybody had similar problems; the only thing that changes is the race" and the group agreed. An African-American participant commented "this training made me aware of the importance of acknowledging one's heritage to be a teacher".

Multiculturalism and bilingualism have benefited the day care programs. Participants with African-American, Hispanic and Haitian populations labeled the classrooms is English, Spanish and French and read multicultural books to the children. Hispanic participants helped to change the policy of only reading books in English in one

of the day care centers with a population of over 95% of Hispanic children. The Hispanic participants helped the director to understand the benefit of reading Spanish literature to the children.

Seven tests were given to evaluate the participants' knowledge after finishing each area of the training. Individual feed back was given; furthermore, a general explanation was available to the group if the evaluation showed that some topics were poorly understood by many participants.

Most of the items in the tests were related to caregivers' everyday work situations. Moreover, review and discussion of the questions after each test was completed reinforced appropriate teaching strategies.

Observation in the classroom was a very valuable part of the practicum evaluation. It helped the writer to evaluate if the theory learned in the seminars was being applied into the classroom. The checklists showed that participants were able to implement most of the theory learned into the classroom. Some of the topics that needed better practice were encouraging critical thinking in children, the teaching of nutrition, and the use of positive guidance.

During the monthly observations participants had feedback of their practices in the classroom by the writer. Observations also helped the writer to know and understand the children's cultural needs in the different sites to be able to give individual advice to the participants.

The results of the implementation of the practicum demonstrated that caregivers and day care programs benefited from multicultural bilingual in-service training. After the in-service training participants gained the knowledge and expertise to implement a developmentally appropriate program.

Recommendations

The results obtained in the evaluation instruments administered to the participants indicate that some minor adjustment will make the multicultural bilingual in-service program training more effective. The duration of the unit on "Promoting physical and cognitive development in children" must be increased by two weeks to provide participants with more opportunities to work in strategies to develop thinking skills in children. The checklists will be more reliable if instead of one, five options for checking items are offered because it is very difficult for the observer to be precise when evaluating only with a yes or no answer. Each item could be rated as almost never, rarely, sometimes, regularly, very often.

During the in-service training bilingual participants must organize a file of articles in Spanish about subjects related to the development of young children. The information can be shared with parents that feel more comfortable reading in Spanish.

Dissemination

The writer contacted the director of a local Life Skills Center concerning publishing a manual for multicultural bilingual trainers based on this practicum. The writer, will also submit workshop proposals to agencies catering to Hispanic clientele to interested them in implementing a multicultural bilingual in-service training for early childhood caregivers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONS ASKED TO AGENCY EXECUTIVES DURING TELECONFERENCES

APPENDIX A

Questions Asked to Agency Executives During Teleconferences

1. Do you think Hispanic children in your area receive high quality education?

2. Are you satisfied with the readiness skills that Hispanic children developed in preschool?

3. Do you think that a program for training caregivers working in a multicultural/bilingual setting is needed?

4. How do you think a multicultural/bilingual program for training caregivers will help in the child care settings in your area?

5. How do you think well trained Hispanic caregivers will affect the community?

APPENDIX B

PERCEPTIONS OF CAREGIVERS BY DIRECTORS OF DAY CARE CENTERS

APPENDIX B

Perceptions of Caregivers by Directors of Day Care Centers

1. How competent are your caregivers?
2. In which areas are your caregivers having difficulty?
3. How would you describe the type of activities offered to the children?
4. Which type of activity is offered daily to teach and reinforce language, math and science concepts?
5. How is science included in the curriculum?
6. What art activities are offered to the children?
7. How are art projects presented to the children?
8. How varied are the activities offered during the day?
9. How is circle time implemented?
10. How do the caregivers relate to parents?

APPENDIX C

TEACHING PRACTICES ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

APPENDIX C

Teaching Practices Assessment Instrument

Name:
Date:

Check the correct answer:

1. Children learn self-discipline by:
a. ____telling them they should be ashamed of behaving in that manner.
b. ____giving children a chance to make up rules.
c. ____ignoring them when they misbehave.
d. ____punishing them when they don't obey the rules.

2. Three children on the playground are observing how a spider makes a web. When the teacher asks them what they are doing they respond that they are watching how the spider webs. Which is the most appropriate comment the teacher can make?
a. ____Don't get near the spider, it can bite you.
b. ____Go and play and leave the spider alone.
c. ____Why do you think the spider is webbing?
d. ____Jump and run around to get your energy out before we go inside the classroom.

3. Children can express their feelings through art when the teacher provides them with:
a. ____cut-outs of Santa Claus, eyes, mouths and cotton beards to glue on.
b. ____crayons and paper.
c. ____animal plastic shapes to trace, pastel color markers and color papers.
d. ____a model of a dog made of playdough and playdough to make a dog

4. Johnny who just turned three years old has been playing with a truck for fifteen minutes. Peter asks him politely to share the truck with him but Johnny refuses. Peter tells the teachers about the incident. Which is the best answer for the teacher?
a. ____tell Johnny he has played enough and now must give the truck to Peter.
b. ____tell Johnny he must share the toy.

c. ____tell Peter he must not telltale about a friend.

d. ____tell Peter that he must learn to solve his own problems.

5. When parents ask advice about how to discipline their child the teacher should:

a. ___offer several suggestions.

b. ___tell them to ask the director who is better qualified to advise.

c. ___discuss at home the child's problem with her family to hear different opinions.

d. ___tell the parents that a good spank in the bottom (not in any other part of the body) can be a good solution.

6. Teacher and assistant teachers:

a. ____must be observing the children under their care at all times.

b. ____if children are busily playing and working at the tables, teacher and assistant teachers could take a few minutes to converse and rest.

c. ____when children are busy teachers and assistant teacher should make plans for the next day.

d. ____children should not be observed the whole time because they become very dependent of adults.

7. The best way to teach about nutrition is:

a. ____decorating the classroom with nice pictures of children eating.

b. ____talking one week about good foods.

c. ____teaching the children good manners at the table.

d. ____talking about nutrition in every occasion that is appropriate.

8. To keep a safe outdoor environment teachers should:

a. ____check the playground every day.

b. ____check the playground once a week.

c. ____not be concerned because that is not part of their job.

d. ____teach the children not to step on sharp objects

9. When a child who does not speak English starts school the teachers should:

a. ____give the child time to get used to the environment and then teach her some phrases in English.

b. ____immediately start teaching phrases in English to make the child feel welcome.

c. ____tell another child to teach her some English.

d. ____tell the teacher assistant to teach the child English half an hour a day.

10. The best way for young children to learn is:

a. ____to let them play part of the day and to give the paper and pencil activities the rest of the day.

b. ____doing the teaching early in the morning when they are alert and ready to learn and then let them play.

c. ____once a day sit them all together and teach the topic of the day.

d. ____offering a challenging environment where they can discover their knowledge through playing.